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SUPER HEROES FROM THE MIND OF

RAZORBLADE

CLIVE BARKER

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92

HOKUM & THE X

ATTACK OF THE
ANALYZER!
THE INVASION
HAS BEGUN!



DIRECT EDITION



A. Williams
Illustrator

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IN A MIX OF MAGIC, COMEDY AND EXPLOSIVE SUSPENSE, FAILED STAND-UP COMIC TRIP MUNROE HAS BECOME THE LAST LINE OF DEFENSE AGAINST A POWERFUL, EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL OVERLORD — IN OTHER WORDS, EARTH'S LAST, BEST HOPE... IS A JOKE.

TEN HOURS AGO, A STAND-UP COMIC NAMED TRIP MUNROE WAS GIVEN EXTRAORDINARY POWER BY A GOD.

CLIVE BARKER PRESENTS...

HOKUM & HEX

NOT AS MUCH FUN AS IT SOUNDS...

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WHAT'S HAPPENED IS... HE'S BEEN
ATTACKED AND ALMOST KILLED
BY VICIOUS-- ALBEIT EXTREMELY
POLITE-- OTHERDIMENSIONAL
MONSTER STORM-TROOPERS...

... DISCOVERED THAT HIS NEWLY
GIVEN POWER TO TRANSFORM
THINGS HAS RATHER A MIND
OF ITS OWN...

... AND MET AN OLD, BEARDED,
OTHERDIMENSIONAL EX-JUDGE
WHOM HE INADVERTENTLY
TRANSFIGURED TO LOOK LIKE
THE FIANCEE WHO'D JUST
LEFT HIM.

HE'S HAD
BETTER DAYS.

NOW HE'S BEEN THROWN
TO HIS DEATH FROM THE
86TH FLOOR OF THE EMPIRE
STATE BUILDINGS...

... AND FINDING THAT FOR
ALL HIS EXTRAORDINARY
NEW POWERS, HE JUST
CAN'T FLY.

IT'S ONE-QUARTER
MILE TO THE GRANITE
AND ASPHALT PAVE-
MENT BELOW.

IN A WORD...

A CORVOcation
of GLOWNS
a tale
of the
Barkerverse

YEE

OH! GOD! NO! I HAVEN'T
PASSED OUT!
I'M WATCHING
MYSELF DIE!

AAAAAAAAAAAA

NO! NO! NO! NO! N--



WHAT?

THAT'S IT?
THAT'S DEATH?

I THOUGHT
I'D FEEL
SOME...

WHAT???

OH NO! NO! I'M
GOING TO THE
WRONG PLACE!

HEY, WHITAMINNI.
THIS ISN'T... I MEAN...
WELL, WHY WOULD HELL
HAVE SEWER LINES?

THIS ISN'T
HELL... IT'S
NEW YORK!

OKAY-OKAY-
OKAY! REALITY
CHECK! I'M DOING
PUNCH LINES --
THAT MUST MEAN
I'M ALIVE...

...AND FLOATING
LIKE A FEATHER
THROUGH SOLID ROCK??

IT'S GOTTA BE
THAT STUPID
POWER! I
MUST'VE TURNED
THE EARTH
AROUND ME
INTO AIR!

SO-- AEW
WHAT DO I
DO?

I MEAN, HOW
FAR CAN I FALL?
WHAT HAPPENS IF I TURN
THE GROUND SOLID
ENOUGH TO STOP? WHAT
IF I --

... HIT AN
UNDERGROUND
SPRING?

UNBELIEVABLE,
UN-BE-LIEVABLE.
I'M ALIVE.

I'M MAYBE A
MILE UNDER-
GROUND, BUT
ALIVE.

NOW--HOW DO
I GET OUT OF
HERE??

SPLASH

ELSEWHERE, ABOVE,
AS THE MORNING
BECOMES
AFTERNOON...

BOY, IT'S
AMAZING THE
THINGS PEOPLE
THROW OUT IN
NEW YORK.

I MEAN, LOOK!
PERFECTLY GOOD
DRAPEES! REMINDS
ME OF THE TIME I
FOUND A BOX FULLA
X-MEN!

MAN, I LOVE
THIS CITY! YOU
NEVER KNOW
WHAT YER
GONNA...

--FIND?

OHHHHH
SH! ALL
RIGHT,
HANDS
OFF!

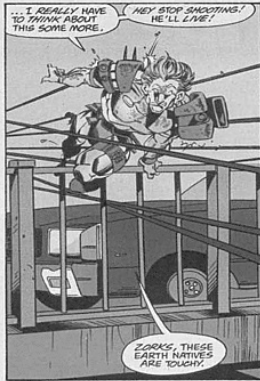
WHAT'D
YOU DO TO MY
HEAD, YOU
MISERABLE...
HEY!

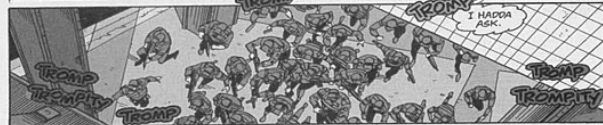
WHERE'S EARTH'S
CHARMION?
WHERE AM
I? WHAT'S
GOING ON?

AND WHAT
ARE YOU
STARING
AT?!!











WHAT DO YOU MEAN IT GOT AWAY? FIND IT!

THAT'S IT. I'M GONE. I'M HOME AND I'M PACKING.



YOU! OUT!

TRIP! HI! WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?

WHATEVER YOU OR YOUR BUDDIES WANT FROM ME-- FORGET IT! I DON'T WANNA PLAY ANYMORE!

AND STOP LOOKING LIKE ANTOINETTE!

LIKE IT'S MY FAULT? YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CHANGED THE LIGHT WAVES AROUND ME.

AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU DON'T WANT TO "ENGAGE IN A PLEASANT OR ENJOYABLE OCCUPATION OR INTEREST" ANYMORE?

STOP IT! JUST... STOP ALL THIS!

FIGURES THEY DON'T HAVE A WORD FOR "PLAY" IN YOUR LANGUAGE.



RIGHT... A GODLIKE BEING HAS GIVEN ME THE POWER TO BE "EARTH'S CHAMPION."

LOOK, I'M NOT A SOLDIER OR A LEADER-- I'M A COMEDIAN! NOW COME THIS GOD

GODWIN.

GODWIN DIDN'T KNOW BETTER? I'M LUCKY TO BE ALIVE!

OH, YOU'RE SO WISE AS TO QUESTION A DEITY'S MOTIVES?

YOU INSTINCTIVELY FOUGHT OFF THOSE CORP!! YESTERDAY, AND KEPT FROM GETTING KILLED TODAY.

WOULD YOU JUST ACCEPT IT AND STOP WHINING ALREADY?



AND WOULD YOU JUST ACCEPT HIM AND STOP Demeanings HIM ALREADY?

AND BEFORE YOU SAY IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS, KNOW THAT I'M TRIP'S BEST FRIEND AND I'VE KNOWN HIM YEARS LONGER THAN YOU.

HE'S A GOOD GUY AND THAT'S NO WAY TO TREAT HIM.

LISE...?!

OF COURSE I'M HIS FRIEND. WHAT'RE YOU, THE GREAT ANTOINETTE, SO FAR ABOVE THE REST OF US WERE WOMEN YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME?

YOU'RE HIS FRIEND.

TRIP, WOULD YOU EXPLAIN TO THIS WOMAN WHO I AM?

STOP!

OKAY... DEEP BREATH.

SOLON REY, MEET ANONA LISA McDONNAN, MY BEST FRIEND SINCE I MOVED TO NEW YORK.

SOLON'S FROM A PLANET CALLED THE NEOBBYS. HE SAYS I'VE BEEN GIVEN THE POWER TO FIGHT SOME SORT OF JETSON'S JIHAD.

IT SEEMS I CAN MAGICALLY TRANSMUTE THINGS NOW, INCLUDING LIGHT. THAT'S WHY HE LOOKS LIKE ANTOINETTE...

...WHO LEFT ME LAST NIGHT.

NOW... THERE ARE CREATURES CALLED THE CORRYI WHO WANT TO KILL ME SO THEY CAN INVADE EARTH, OKAY?

SHUT UP. NOW, I KNOW THIS SOUNDS CRAZY BUT--

LISE...?

DON'T FORGET FELON BALE.

HOW DARE YOU. HOW DARE YOU MAKE FUN OF ME THAT WAY.

I CAME TO YOUR DEFENSE, YOU SLIME!

LISE, WAIT!

YOU WAIT! I'M SURE FELON BALE THINKS YOU'RE DEAD.

--SO WE'VE THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE AGAINST THE NEXT THING I KNOW FELON BALE'S GOING TO SEND...







SAY, HOW ABOUT YOU, SIR-- THE MAN WITH THE FUNNY NAME.

"TRIP" MUNROE, IS IT? HOW NICE FOR YOU, SIR. I CAN JUST SEE YOUR PARENTS AT BENSE GENERAL--



"THAT'S RIGHT, DOCTOR, WE'RE HAVING HIM TRIP."

"HONNY, MEET HIS BROTHERS, 'SCUMBLE' AND 'FALL'."

HEY, IT WAS THE '60S

REMEMBER THE '60S? THAT'S WHEN GUYS WITH POYTAILS WERE STILL CONSIDERED HIP?

NOW IT'S LIKE, "YES, SIR, AND CAN I SHOW YOU SOME LOVE BEARS TO GO WITH THAT?"



BUT HEY... STANDUP COMICS ARE SUPPOSED TO LOOK GOOFY. SO ANYWAY'S NOT SO DUMB.

Y'KNOW, TRY. THAT'S HIS NAME, GRANDFATHER. THE MASCIAN, DIDJA KNOW TRIP WAS A MASCIAN, TOO?



THAT'S RIGHT, HE MADE HIS CAREER DISAPPEAR.

WHICH IS AMAZING, 'CAUSE THIS GUY WANTED TO DO STANDUP SINCE HE WAS 9 YEARS OLD.

"AND WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE, TIMMY?" "POLICEMAN!" "AND YOU, JOHNNY?" "FIREMAN!" "AND YOU, IRVING?" "I WANT PEOPLE TO LAUGH AT ME!"



GEEZ, WITH ALL THAT POSTURE, YOU'D THINK HE'D BE BETTER AT IT BY NOW.

AND Y'KNOW, PEOPLE SAY TO ME, "BUT MONA LISA! HE'S YOUR BEST FRIEND!"

AND I SAY, "HEY-- I'VE GOT 3 STRAY DOGS, 2 CATS AND A WOUNDED PIGEON IN MY APARTMENT. I'M THE MOTHER THERESA OF COMEDY!"



I MEAN, YEAH, HE'S CUTE IF YOU'RE NOT TOO PICKY. AND HE VOLUNTEERS AT SOUP KITCHENS, AND TOOK CARE OF ME WHEN I WAS SICK IN BED.

AND NO MATTER HOW MUCH HE FALLS, HE'S OUT THERE EVERY MORN', TRYING TO GET A LAUGH.



UNFORTUNATELY, HE'S ABOUT AS FUNNY AS *POSSIBLE* LIFE.

BUT SOME WOMEN FIND THAT APPEALING. THERE WAS THE *BAXER* CHICK HE MARRIED... AND THE ONE WHO THOUGHT SHE MIGHT BE A LESBIAN, AND FOUND OUT SHE WAS...



AND OF COURSE, THERE'S ANTOINETTE, THE KIND OF GIRL YOU'D TAKE HOME TO MOM.

THAT'S 'CAUSE IF YOU TOOK HER HOME TO DAD, THEY'D RUN OFF TO RIO TOGETHER.

OH! BUT I FORGET! THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED WITH THE *BAXER* CHICK!



OKAY, SO TRIP'S HAD IT ROUGH. THAT'S WHY HE'S A COMIC AND NOT AN INVESTMENT BANKER.

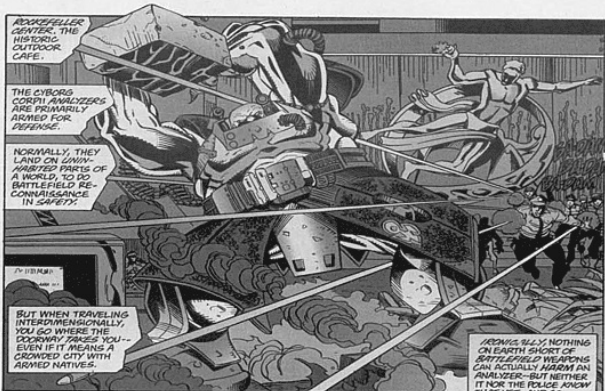
BUT IF HE MAKES FUN OF THIS MONA LISA, SHE DOESN'T SMILE BACK.

THAT'S THE FUNNY THING ABOUT COMEDY, TRIP.



IT HURTS.







BO-DA-KOOOM

YEEEE-AHHHHH!
JUST KIDDING!

BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA

THREAT REASSESSMENT.
ANALYZING ADDITIONAL
DATA. NATIVE DESIGNATE
TOP MURKOW.

AY Y!
YEEEE! WHAT
AM I DOING
HERE? I CAN'T
DO THIS.

OH, WAIT--
MAYBE I CAN
TURN THIS
TABLECLOTH
TO STEEL....

OH,
GREAT.
I TURNED
IT INTO
STEEL-
FOAM.

WOOPS!

FLUNCH

GOOD!
WENT
THROUGH THE
FLOOR JUST LIKE
THE GARDEN
TODAY.

OKAY...
CONCENTRATE
...HERE'S
THE WIND--
UP...





I've always been a great fan of magic...

...as a subject, and have felt that, by and large, with the exception of Dr. Strange, comics haven't really dealt with it as interestingly as I think it could be. Hokum and Hex is my take on how magic may operate in the last part of the 20th century.

Tripp Monroe is a failed stand-up comedian who is, by complete chance, given magical powers. He is presented with an awesome challenge that he's utterly incapable of carrying through with any great authority. He must use the powers he has been given to defend the planet from interdimensional aliens, led by the great villain, Felon Bale — he's probably the most powerful villainous entity in the entire Decamund.

One of the interesting things about popular art is how you can reach conclusions that very much more sophisticated minds take a long time to reach, because of the kind of raw, Jungian instincts. I believe in the collective unconscious, and that it populates the world with gods and demons. And these brightly-colored creatures, who descend from the stars with powers that are superhuman, in order to save us from our own worst instincts and those who would destroy us, are gods by other names.

I follow comics, by and large, are telling the folktale tales, the religious tales which have taken from grace in other forms. We still need those miraculous tales, we still need to know that there's a hand to save us, should we fail. And it will not be a human hand. I think we need the comfort of these stories just as we need the ghost stories and the urban legend. We need a sense of divine, we need (as in the title of the wonderful book by Peter Berge) a rumor of angels. We need to know that something miraculous is around the corner. And even if we don't believe this is actually happening in our world, we can gather for a while around a campfire and hear ghost tales, or we can sit and read of heroes.

—Excerpted from *Comics Scene*.

who's hokum

This is Clive's story — I should say that off the bat. I need to say that because his telling of it would be so exponentially more interesting that I need to beg your imagination to pardon this telling. In searching desperately for tidbits from behind the newsprint curtain to share, some legitimate anecdotal plagiarizing is bound to occur. Sue me.

So, where did the name for this title come from, you ask? Well, "hokum" is a vaudeville term, created out of the old two-man stand-up routine. The first man would shoot out a line, commenting on how tired he was, or the like, to which his straight man would reply, "How come?" Yucks would ensue. You get the idea.

Over the years, the actual line was shortened, to become "hokum," and became a showman's term referring to pretentious nonsense and just plain baloney — the inedible kind. And now it's taken on an entirely new context, as the first part of this book's title.

what the hex

This part is pretty self-explanatory — hex is magic, the unknown; the element of the

supernatural, that, the more we seek to explain it, moves and shifts inexorably into the realm of the unknowable. And we really wouldn't have it any other way. We all seek magic — in relationships, in our daily choices, and in the very fact of our lives themselves. We're fascinated by that unknown, whether we deem it luck, or coincidence, or an ultimate sign of the divine. It is that fascination which will make this title stand out as dramatically different, in its ability to observe the absurdity and amazement in everyday life, and contrasting that with the lure of the fantastic.

and so

All of this is basically to explain that there is no Mr. Hokum, and there is no Mrs. Hex. It's a point of contention for some — it forces thought. And I think that's great.

the question

At one of the initial meetings centering around the start-up of the Razorline imprint, the concern came to light that there were surprisingly few comic titles which in no way named the main characters in the book. Think about it. Besides Sheezami and Star Trek from our Dubious Competition, both of which couldn't be named after the main characters for various obvious reasons, we couldn't come up with many titles.

The question arose, would readers be drawn to a title whose only guarantee was a wild, one-of-a-kind ride? Could they handle a title with no promises, whose main character might very well change in mid-series? Would they latch on for a no-holds-barred adventure that dared to laugh with and at itself?

the envelope, please

And the answer followed. This book — and this line, for that matter — exists to stand atop of what's been done before, at the same time as it stands in the face of the status quo. You read comics because you love them (we hope), artificial investment value aside (or preferably out the window), and because they entertain. We make them for pretty much the same reason.

Clive's idea in creating the Razorline is to bring some of the magic he enjoyed in reading the classic Marvel titles to a new generation of readers, through his unique vision. But more, we're anxious to show not only what comics once did, but bring them to the new frontiers of what they could do. To bring you the best art; to tell fully developed stories with real, rounded and believable characters; and to take the whole kit and kaboodle to the farthest reaches of what is, and beyond your imagination.

And that's just the beginning.

last word

Of course, the next part comes from you. Let us know how we're doing by sending us a line at:

Razorline
c/o Marvel Comics
387 Park Avenue South
10th Floor
New York, NY 10016

See you in thirty.

So this is what I tell people:

"It's about a failed stand-up comic who, through cosmic circumstance, finds himself Earth's champion against the invading hordes." Say it kinda like Woody Allen, and you're guaranteed a laugh. (Maybe not from Ma Farrow, but you get the idea.)

I can't take credit (or blame) for this story conception. That comes, as the cover logo says, from the mind of Clive Barker — a great name by the way. Easy to pronounce. Whereas I'm constantly explaining, "Lo-VEE-heh, rhymes with yu-tel-tel-tel." But anyway, since it's my own unshakable Italian nerve about the credits for "writer," I've been asked to split 250 words or less on "What Hokum and Hex means to me."

Happily, I'm already halfway there. Which is good, because I have no idea what to say.

All I can tell you is that in the next few issues, Trip finds himself, through no fault of his own, confronting a high-tech female bounty hunter with a thing for "Antonette," a washed-up retired superhero on his last day on Earth; a sadistic, game-playing monster called Inextricis; the troubled Hyperkind team, the Paxis; and Felon Bale's personal champion, Bloodshed.

In any case, see you next issue, when we transcribe a kibitzing conversation between Clive and myself. After that? Hey, I'm game for letters.

Maybe even whole words.

Next in Hokum and Hex:

Meet Wrath — a beautiful and deadly bounty hunter hired to find the reality behind Trip's "magic"! She's determined to make him her ultimate trophy — dead or alive!

CUTTING EDGE ALERT!

Next week in SAINT SINNER #2: They say you can't go home again — as our newly empowered hero is about to discover firsthand, when he returns home nine years older overnight, and wanted for murder!

ELSEWHERE, ALONG THE
RAZOR'S EDGE:

HYPERKIND #3: What happened to the original Paxis — and what powerful malevolent force wants to make the world believe they never existed? Questions beckon in "The Big Lie!" — but the price of the truth may be the destruction of L.A.
ECTOKID #3: Dex takes his first furtive steps into the Ectosphere — into the heart of a demonic maelstrom! With heroes the like of Cyranoe De Bergerac and Edgar Allan Poe at his side, Dex's first Ectospherian adventure might just be his last!